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December 13th, 1917

Rev. W. K. Shearer,

Drumto.

Dear Mr. Shearer:

I myself would think that the article in the "Presbyterian" sets forth the correct attitude that we must maintain with regard to Union during the present truce. There is no doubt that the policy of the Church is that Union has been set down by the Assembly and remains unchanged, but until the war is over no action one way or another is to be taken with regard to that policy. Meantime such Unions as may be effected should be effected having regard of the local necessities of the case. Undoubtedly the general attitude of the Church has made such action possible in a way that would not have been possible before, but I think that we have to in all honour not push local organisations using as an argument that the larger union has been decided upon. There is no doubt that the last Assembly passed the co-operating plans which were drawn up in view of the larger final union coming into effect before very long and as I said this remains in my judgment the policy of the Church. It is a somewhat anomalous and difficult position, but I think with a view to the final greater good we should go slowly and only effect such unions as would come naturally without any insistence upon the coming union. I regret that I am unable to give you a more satisfactory reply.

Yours sincerely,